

App. No.: 09/863,882

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings of claims in the present application.

**What is claimed is:**

1. (currently amended) A server apparatus for applying one or more incentive points by which a service can be received in response to an amount of said points to be used in a Web site, comprising:

network means for connecting a first apparatus and a second apparatus, said first apparatus being related to a person who shares a cost required to provide the service, and said second apparatus being related to a person who applies said points;

applicable point number storage means for calculating an applicable point number based upon a point number responding to the cost shared by the person related to the first apparatus which is notified from said first apparatus, and also based on an applied point number, and for storing therein the calculated applicable point number;

advertisement storage means for storing therein information used to display an advertisement with respect to the person concerning said first apparatus;

display point determining means for determining a point number to be displayed on said advertisement within said applicable point number in accordance with a predetermined rule that includes decreasing said point number as a total number of points, accumulated by the person for said advertisement, increases, wherein the larger the total number of points accumulated by the person becomes, the smaller the point number to be displayed becomes stepwise;

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web server means for producing a web page which displays said advertisement with respect to the person concerning said first apparatus, to which the determined point number has been applied under a selectable condition, and for displaying the produced web page on said second apparatus; and

applied point managing means for storing thereinto said displayed point number applied to said advertisement and an identifier for said second apparatus in relation to each other when the selection of said advertisement is accepted from said second apparatus.

2. (previously presented) The server apparatus as in claim 1, wherein said server apparatus further comprises;

online shopping means; and

said service responding to the amount of said points to be used corresponds to a discount service of purchased goods in the online shopping.

3. (currently amended) A program product capable of operating a computer as such a server apparatus for applying one or more incentive points by which a service can be received in response to an amount of said points to be used in a web site, wherein said program product causes the computer to execute:

a network process for connecting a first apparatus and a second apparatus, said first apparatus being related to a person who shares cost required to provide the service, and said second apparatus being related to a person who applies said points;

an applicable point number storage process for calculating an applicable point number based upon a point number responding to the cost shared by the person related to the first

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apparatus, and also an applied point number which is notified from said first apparatus, and for storing thereinto the calculated applicable point number;

an advertisement storage process for storing thereinto information used to display an advertisement related to the person concerning said first apparatus;

a display point determining process for determining a point number to be displayed on said advertisement within said applicable point number in accordance with a predetermined rule that includes decreasing said point number as a total number of points, accumulated by the person for said advertisement, increases, wherein the larger the total number of points accumulated by the person becomes, the smaller the point number to be displayed becomes stepwise;

a web server process for producing a web page which displays the advertisement related to the person concerning said first apparatus, to which the determined point number has been applied under a selectable condition, and for displaying the produced web page on said second apparatus; and

an applied point managing process for storing thereinto said displayed point number applied to said advertisement and an identifier for said second apparatus in relation to each other when the selection of said advertisement is accepted from said second apparatus.

**4. (currently amended)** A method for applying to an advertisement viewer, one or more incentive points by which a service can be received in response to an amount of said points to be used in a Web site, comprising:

a step in which as to cost which is notified via a network from an advertisement provider who shares cost required to provide a service, an applicable point number is calculated based

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upon both a point number in response to the cost shared by the advertisement provider and also a point number which has been applied to the advertisement viewer, and then, the calculated applicable point number is stored in an applicable point number storage means;

a step in which a point number to be displayed on the advertisement of said advertisement provider is determined within the applicable point number in accordance with a point applicable rule which has been previously stored in the storage means, wherein said point applicable rule includes decreasing said point number as a total number of points, accumulated by the advertisement viewer for said advertisement, increases, wherein the larger the total number of points accumulated by the advertisement viewer becomes, the smaller the point number to be displayed becomes stepwise;

a step in which a web page which displays the advertisement of said advertisement provider, to which the determined point number is applied, under selectable condition to the advertisement viewer, is produced and then, the produced web page is transmitted to a terminal of the advertisement provider; and

a step in which when said advertisement is selected by the terminal of said advertisement provider, both the point number applied to said advertisement and the advertisement viewer are stored into a storage means in relation to each other.

**5. (previously presented)** The point applying method as claimed in claim 4 wherein said point applying method further comprises:

a step for accepting a purchase proposal of goods via a network; and

said service responding to the amount of said points to be used corresponds to a discount service of goods purchased in on-line shopping.

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6. (currently amended) A service providing method for providing a service to a customer responsive to one or more incentive points applied by the customer when an order by the customer is accepted in on-line shopping for accepting an order via a network, wherein:

a cost sharing person who shares cost as to said service corresponds to a person who invests money in a sales person who sells goods in the on-line shopping; and

said cost sharing person is separated from the sales person;

wherein the sales person executes a process operation causing an advertisement with respect to the cost sharing person to be presented under a selectable condition to the customer prior to the acceptance of the order by the customer; and

a point application to a customer is carried out by accepting the selection of the advertisement with respect to said cost sharing person, which is presented under said selectable condition that includes decreasing said point number as a total number of points, accumulated by the customer for said advertisement, increases, wherein the larger the total number of points accumulated by the customer becomes, the smaller the point number to be presented becomes stepwise.

7-8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) The service providing method as claimed in claim 6 wherein: the service responding to the amount of said points is to discount a purchase price of goods ordered through the on-line shopping.

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10. (currently amended) A server comprising:

a web page display arrangement for producing a web page which displays an advertisement including a point number based on a predetermined rule;

an applied point manager for storing ~~the point number applied to the advertisement and~~ an identifier for a user who selects the advertisement and a stored point total associated with the user, the applied point manager adding the point number included in the advertisement selected by the user to the stored point total, the applied point manager applying the stored point total points as a discount between the user and a retailer; and

a network arrangement adapted to communicate with a user and to allocate a cost of the discount from the retailer to an advertiser the advertiser being associated with the advertisement;

wherein the predetermined rule includes decreasing the point number each time the user or another user selects the advertisement; and

wherein the larger the stored point total accumulated by the user becomes, the smaller the point number to be displayed becomes stepwise.

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